

GRASSHOPPER MAKER'S SONG

HUSIC BY DUŠAN BOGDANOVIĆ

Julian Bogdanović recalls the moment he decided to become a classteal musician, listening to Bach's Passacaglia in C billion for organ, "I thought, well, this is really the summit," he says. "I felt that the incredible perfection, beauty, and expressiveness of that music was reason enough to dedicate my life to classical musici.

But the 'Vigoslav-born mustician didn't want to limit himself to interpreting the mustic of others, so he began to form his own path within the classical guitar world. Through a synthesis of composition, improvisation, scholarship, performance, and the integration of ethnic musical idioms, he has created a unious voice that has touched audiences from eastern Europe to east Asia and inspired a growing number of promleng guttarists to record his compositions. The improvisation-based piece "Grasshopper Maker's Song," from his Worlds CD, typilies his adventurous

approach to the classical guitar. Begistanoid-fastered his career at the age of 20, when he completed his studies in guitar and composition at the Geneva Conservatory, in the two years that of-lowed, he took first prite at the laternational Guitar Competition in Geneva, began teaching at the Conservatory, and gave a successful debut at Carnegel Hall—an internal crasers are at ractificional classical guitariat was in hall swing. Barrily a year state, in the midst classical guitariat was in hall swing.

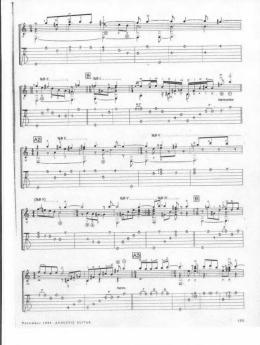


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SO I'm kind of nervous as it is. I've never played this club before, And when I get a good look at the sound guy I get really seared. A wave of panic hits me. Then I grab my secret weapon. My Seymour Duncan Acoustic Tube' in seconds we clipped into my guitar and my worries disappear. With He stacked, hum-canceling deelign I get true acoustic response for natural sound. An adjustable volume knob right on the pickup puts me in control (corry Mr. Sound Guy). Plus. Seymour Duncan's republicance.



success, Bogdanović found himself in a difficult situation that forced him to rethink his artistic direction. The rigid demands of his concert schedule were not allowing him the space to develop his creativity, and the pressures of maintaining such a focused career at so young an age became unbearable.

"I felt like my life was so defined that I might as well die right now and it wouldn't make much difference," says Bogdanović. Equally disturbing was the realization that he had not even chosen this touring locus for himself. Until then, he had never seriously thought about what he wanted to accomplish with his

music, or the specific direction he wanted to take. Bogdanović could have continued down the secure, conventional path, but that way seemed a little too worn; so he chose another. 'One day I just decided I was canceling all of my concerts,' he recalls, 'Then I just took a long, long break.'

This decision to redirect his life was greatly misunderstood. Well, it was a disaster, obviously, Bogdanovic says of the cancellations. Concerts had been scheduled long in advance, and some of the promoters were angry at the young performer's audacity. Still, the break seemed to be just what the developing

artist needed. For the better part of three years, he practically gave uplying the guitar and lived as simply as he could, developing a reflective gave where he could prioritize his interests and rediscover his molivations. "It was great for me because I could suddenly revealuate all the decisions I had made." he says. "After that I really opened mysell up to a much larger view of what it is to be a mustician—and what it is to be a human belief.

Of course the inspiration of Bach's Passacaglia stayed with him, so eventially Bogdanovic began to rebuild his career. In the early 80s, he immigrated to the United States and settled in Los Angeles. He began teaching at the University of Southern California and touring as a member of the Falla Tric. Six years ago he moved north, Joiling the faculty of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he has been

teaching ever since.

Although Bogdanović once again finds himself in the midst of a success find music caree. In has been careful to make creativity and expression its focus. Three days he allows plenty of specific considerations with Misrolate Table. John the consideration with Misrolate Table. John the consideration with Misrolate Table. John the consideration of the co

Bogdanović's music has been steadiby gaining in popularity ever since his first pieces were published in 1980, and his compositions have been recorded by such internationally known guitarists as Eduardo Isaac, William Kanengiser, Andriano Sebastiani, the Newman-Oltman and Gruber-Maldar guitar duos, and the Asti Quartet. His Six Illuminations for Plano are being recorded and performed by Brazilian plantst Fablo Luz, and a commission from the Pacific Dance Company was the stimulus for "Crow" his "contemporary blues ballet-poem" based on the poetry of Ted Hughes. An interesting commission from Shirley Yamamoto of a work for flute, guitar, and Japanese koto also seems likely.



Bogdanović's compositional style blends a variety of ethnic idioms with conventional forms from the classical

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ern rock and soul. European art music, and the music of Brazil are just a few of the flavors that seep into his works. Specific examples of his particular kind of integration can be found in the way Indian raga influenced the forms for his two "Reguettes," A fascination with the complicated polyrhythms of west African music was the stimulus for his Polyrhythmic and Polymetric Studies for Guisar and Seven Easier Polymetric Studies. Polyrhythm has since been an important part of his technique, adding to an already sophisticated sense of rhythm inherited from his Balkan background.

Unlike most classical guitarists. Rogdanović has developed a refined style of improvisation based on the same musical languages and rhythmic diversity found in his notated compositions. He uses this spontaneous way of expressing himself in many of his recorded works, including "Grasshopper Maker's Song," The inspiration for the piece came from a clience meeting while on tour in the Orient. One day near a Hong Kong market, Bogdanović happened upon a peaceful-looking gentleman making grasshoppers out of straw. Bogdanović eventually learned that as a baby the grasshopper maker had been left in a garbage can to die. A group of Taoist monks found him. raised him, and taught him how to make the straw grasshoppers that would enable him to earn a living. 'For nearly 40 years he has been going to that wall to make and sell his grasshoppers," Boxdanovic says. "There's something very satisfying about that man and the power of focus and simplicity."

DISCOGRAPHY

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